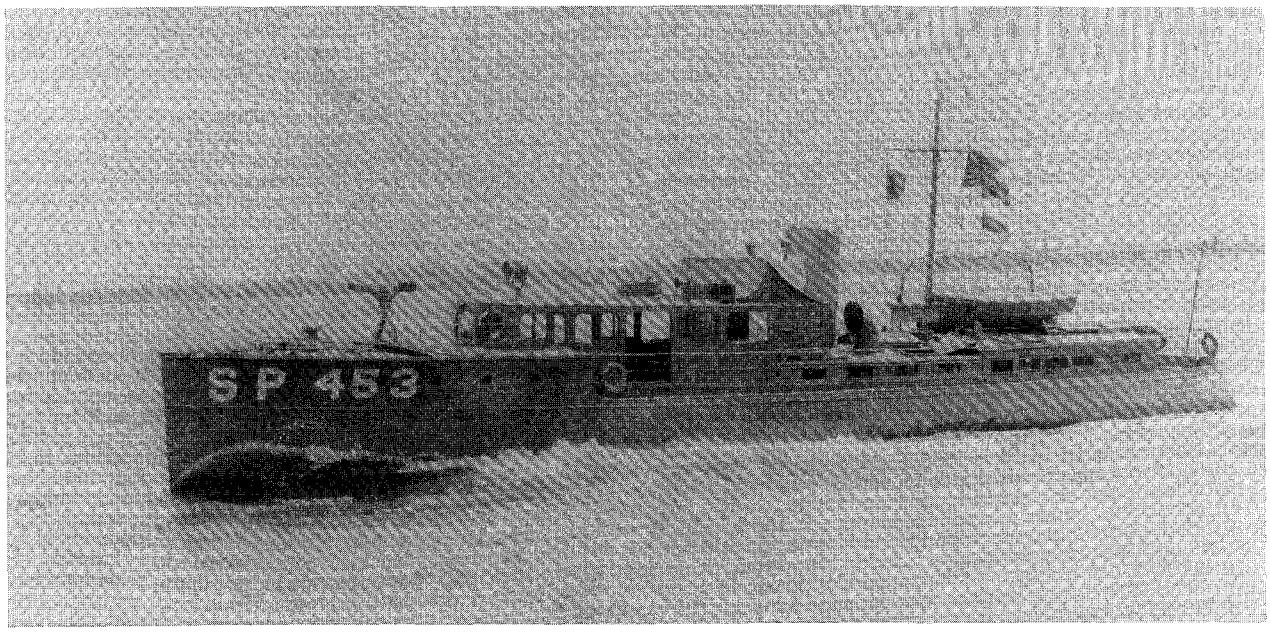


Ameera (SP–453) during World War I. Note her covered "main battery" forward and designation painted on her bow. (NH 57600)

numerous broken light bulbs forward. Some fittings mounted on the overhead were broken off, and several valves were sprung open. However, the submarine suffered no crippling damage and moved on to continue her patrol off the northeast coast of New Ireland

She spotted another Japanese ship on 3 January 1943, a destroyer which apparently was waiting to rendezvous with a convoy from the Palau Islands. The submarine was unable to attack the ship and, two days later, set a course for Brisbane. She reached that Australian port on 11 January and safely concluded her patrol.

Following this patrol the submarine's period of refit was cut to 12 days due to the urgent need for submarines to patrol enemy infested waters. She got underway on 24 January but was forced to return to Brisbane for repair of minor leaks which developed during a deep dive *Amberjack* again departed Brisbane on the 26th and began her third patrol, which took her to waters surrounding the Solomon Islands. On 29 January, she was directed to pass close to Tetipari Island and then proceed to the northwest and patrol the approaches to Shetland harbor.

On 1 February, the submarine was ordered to move north and patrol the western approaches to Buka Passage. She complied with these directions and made her first radio report on 3 February. *Amberjack* had made contact on 1 February with a Japanese submarine 14 miles southeast of the Treasury Islands. She also claimed to have sunk a two-masted schooner by gunfire at a position 20 miles from Buka on the afternoon of the 3d. At the time of this report, the submarine was ordered to move south along the Buka-to-Shorland shipping lane and to also patrol east of Vella Lavella.

In a second radio transmission on 4 February, *Amberjack* reported having sunk a 5,000-ton freighter laden with explosives in a two-hour night surface attack on the 4th. During this engagement, one crew member was killed by machinegun fire, and one officer was wounded in the hand. On the 8th, the submarine was directed to move to the west side of Ganongga Island. Two days later, she moved south to cover the traffic routes from Rabaul and Buka to Shortland Island.

The last transmission was received from *Amberjack* on 14 February. She reported having been forced down on the 13th by two destroyers, and that she had recovered an enemy aviator from the water and taken him prisoner. All further messages to the vessel remained unanswered. The submarine was reported as presumed lost on 22 March 1943. Her name was struck from the Navy list on 21 June 1943.

No conclusive explanation was ever found as to the cause of her loss. Postwar analysis of Japanese records provide several clues but no positive confirmation.

Amberjack won three battle stars for her World War II service.

II

(SS–522: dp. 1,570 (surf.), 2,415 (subm.); l. 311′8″; b. 27′3″; dr. 15′5″ (mean); s. 20.25 k. (surf.), 8.75 k. (subm.); cpl. 81; a. 10 21″ tt., 1 5″, 1 40mm.; cl. *Balao*)

The second *Amberjack* (SS–522) was laid down on 8 February 1944 at the Boston Navy Yard; launched on 15 December 1944; sponsored by Mrs. Dina C. Lang; and commissioned on 4 March 1946, Comdr. William B. Parham in command.

Following shakedown training in the West Indies and in the Gulf of Mexico, *Amberjack* reported on 17 June for duty with Submarine Squadron (SubRon) 8. Operating out of the Submarine Base, New London, Conn., she conducted training missions in the North Atlantic, and, in November 1946, made a cruise above the Arctic Circle. In January 1947, the submarine entered the Portsmouth (N. H.) Naval Shipyard for extensive modifications and thereafter spent about a year undergoing a "Guppy" II conversion (from greater underwater propulsive power) during which her hull and sail were streamlined and additional batteries and a snorkel were installed to increase her submerged speed, endurance, and maneuverability. In January 1948, she reported for duty with SubRon 4 based at Key West, Fla. She operated along the east coast and in the West Indies for a little more than 11 years. Her schedule included the development of tactics and independent ship exercises, type training, periodic overhauls, and fleet exercises. During this period, she also visited numerous Caribbean ports. In July of 1952, *Amberjack* was transferred to the newly established SubRon 12, though she remained based at Key West and her employment continued as before.

Early in August 1959, after more than 11 years of operations out of Key West, the submarine's home port was changed to Charleston, S.C. She arrived there on the 8th and reported for duty with her former squadron, SubRon 4. While working out of her new home port, *Amberjack*'s operations remained much as they had been before with one significant difference: she began making deployments to European waters. In August, September, and October of 1960, the submarine participated in a NATO exercise before making a week-long port visit to Portsmouth, England. She returned to Charleston late in October and re-

sumed her normal routine. Between May and September of 1961, the warship deployed to the Mediterranean Sea for duty in the 6th Fleet. After a three-year interlude operating along the east coast and in the West Indies, *Amberjack* made another Mediterranean cruise between 7 July and 1 November 1964. She spent the ensuing 29 months working out of Charleston. In 1967, the submarine made a three-month deployment to the Mediterranean between 24 April and 24 July. On 2 September 1969, following another 25 months of operations along the east coast and in the West Indies, she embarked upon her last Charleston-based tour of duty in European waters during which she participated in another NATO exercise with units of the British, Canadian, and Dutch navies. At the conclusion of the exercise, *Amberjack* visited a number of ports in northern Europe before returning to Charleston on 12 December 1969.

On 9 July 1970, *Amberjack* arrived in her new home port, Key West, her base for the remainder of her service in the American Navy. She made her last deployment to the Mediterranean between 27 November 1972 and 30 March 1973. On 17 October 1973, *Amberjack* was decommissioned at Key West, and her name was struck from the Navy list. That same day, she was transferred to the Brazilian Navy and commissioned as *Ceara* (S–12). As of the end of 1984, she was still active in the Brazilian Navy.

Ameera

(MB: dp. 13.4 t.; l. 71′3″; b. 10′8″; dr. 3′6″; s. 25 k.; a. 1 1-pdr., 1 mg.)

Ameera was a motorboat built in 1917 at Camden, N.J., by the Mathis Yacht Building Co.; purchased by the Navy from Alexander Sellers, Ardmore, Pa., on 23 July 1917; designated SP—453; and placed in commission on 11 August 1917, Chief Boatswain's Mate C. E. Pearson in command.

Following her commissioning, *Ameera* was assigned to patrol duty in the 4th Naval District. After World War I ended in November 1918, the ship performed dispatch and port duties at Philadelphia, Pa., until she was placed in reduced commission at the Philadelphia Navy Yard in June 1919. On 24 July 1919, *Ameera* was ordered to be sold. She was decommissioned in September 1919 and was sold at auction on 27 April 1920 to Mr. T. E. Mitten.

Amelia

(Sch: t. 72; a. 1 12-pdr.)

Amelia—a schooner purchased on Lake Erie on 26 December 1812—was found to be unfit for service and, therefore, never saw action. She was sold at Erie, Pa., in May of 1815.

America

The large land mass in the Western Hemisphere consisting of northern and southern continents originally connected by an isthmus, but now separated by the Panama Canal. Although discovered by Christopher Columbus, America is named for Amerigo Vespucci who first recognized it as a new continent. The term America is often used loosely to designate the United States of America.

(SL: t. 1,982; l. 182′6″ (upper gun deck); b. 50′6″; dph. 23′; cpl. 626; a. 20 long 18-pdrs., 32 long 12-pdrs., 14 long 9-pdrs.)

On 9 November 1776, the Continental Congress authorized the construction of three 74-gun ships of the line. One of these men-of-war, *America*, was laid down in May 1777 in the shipyard of John Langdon on Rising Castle (now Badger) Island in the Piscataqua River between Portsmouth, N.H., and Kittery, Maine.

However, progress on her construction was delayed by a chronic scarcity of funds and a consequent shortage of skilled craftsmen and well seasoned timber. The project dragged on for over two years under the immediate supervision of Col. James Hackett as master shipbuilder and the overall direction of John Langdon. Then, on 6 November 1779, the Marine Committee named Capt. John Barry as her prospective commanding officer and ordered him to ". . . hasten, as much as will be in your power, the completing of that ship . . . ."

Nevertheless, the difficulties which previously had slowed the building of the warship continued to prevail during the ensuing months, and little had been accomplished by mid-March 1780 when Barry applied for a leave of absence to begin on the 23d. However, he did perform one notable service for the ship. In November 1777, after inspecting the unfinished vessel which was slated to become his new command, he strongly recommended against a proposal, then under consideration, to reduce her to a 54-gun frigate. His arguments carried the day, and the Marine Committee decided to continue the work of construction according to the ship's original plans.

All possibility of Barry's commanding *America* ended on 5 September 1780 when he was ordered to Boston to take command of the finest ship ever to serve in the Continental Navy, the 36-gun frigate *Alliance* which had recently arrived from Europe. Over nine months later, on 23 June 1781, Congress ordered the Continental Agent of Marine, Robert Morris, to get *America* ready for sea and, on the 26th, picked Capt. John Paul Jones as her commanding officer. Jones reached Portsmouth on 31 August and threw himself into the task of completing the man-of-war. However, before the work was finished, Congress decided on 3 September 1782 to present the ship to King Louis XVI of France to replace the French ship of the line *Magnifique* which had run aground and been destroyed on 11 August 1782, while attempting to enter Boston harbor. The ship was also to symbolize the new nation's appreciation for France's service to and sacrifices in behalf of the cause of the American patriots.

Despite his disappointment over losing his chance to command the largest warship ever built in the Western Hemisphere, Jones remained in Portsmouth striving to finish the new ship of the line. His labors bore fruit on 5 November 1782 when *America*—held partially back by a series of ropes calculated to break in sequence to check the vessel's acceleration, lest she come to grief on the opposite bank of the river—slipped gracefully into the waters of the Piscataqua. After she had been rigged and fitted out, the ship—commanded by M. le Chevalier de Macarty Martinge, who had commanded *Magnifique* when she was wrecked—departed Portsmouth on 24 June 1783 and reached Brest, France, on 16 July.

Little is known of her subsequent service under the French flag other than the fact it was brief. A bit over three years later, she was carefully examined by a survey committee which found her damaged by dry rot beyond economical repair, probably caused by her wartime construction from green timber. She was accordingly scrapped and a new French warship bearing the same name was built.

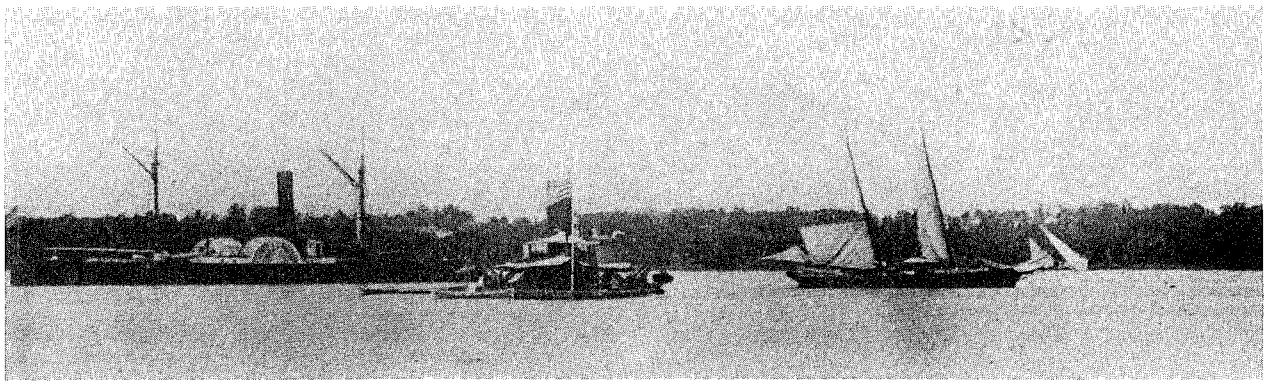
America, a ship-rigged whaler, was purchased by the Navy at New Bedford, Mass., on 8 November 1861 as part of its "Stone Fleet." Filled with stones, she was sailed to Charleston, S.C., and sunk at the harbor mouth on 19 and 20 December 1861 to block the channel into that Confederate port.

I

(Sch: t. 100; l. 111′; b. 25′; dr. 12′; a. 1 12-pdr. r., 2 24-pdr. sb.)

The first *America* was a racing schooner designed by George Steers and built at New York City in the shipyard of William H. Brown. The yacht was constructed for a syndicate headed by John Cox Stevens, the commodore of the New York Yacht Club, and including other prominent sportmen who wished to win recognition for American shipbuilding and sailing skill during Crystal Palace exposition—the first of the great international world's fairs. Launched on 3 May 1851, *America* sailed for Europe.

During that summer, she won distinction in a number of yacht races and proved herself a match for the fastest sailing craft. Sailing a course around the Isle of Wight on 22 August, she won the Royal Yacht Society regatta and was visited by Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII. Her owners now felt that they had achieved their desired demonstration of American shipbuilding and seamanship, and sold her to a



America, in the Severn River, *circa* 1866–1870, with the monitor *Tonawanda* (center) and an unidentified gunboat (left). (NH 46618)

British purchaser on 1 September 1851. A subsequent purchaser renamed her *Camilla*; under British colors she continued to show herself seaworthy as well as fast.

In 1860 Henry Edward Decie bought the ship and, after competing in English Channel races, took her to Cape Verde Islands, ostensibly en route to the West Indies. When the secession crisis in the United States threatened to escalate into civil war, Decie departed St. Vincent in *Camilla* early in 1861 and headed for the Southern coast, apparently hoping to find in the Confederacy some way of turning a profit from his yacht.

The schooner arrived at Savannah, Ga., on 25 April 1861, shortly after the attack on Fort Sumter. Decie journeyed to Montgomery, Ala., where he met Confederate President Jefferson Davis. He is said to have secretly sold *Camilla* to the Confederate Government, and she was supposedly renamed *Memphis*. Documents substantiating this have not been found. In any case, the yacht—still commanded by Decie—was next used to carry a Southern purchasing commission to England where she briefly resumed racing before again sailing for the South around 21 August. The schooner ran through the blockade into Jacksonville, Fla., and was inspected there by a Confederate customs agent on 25 October 1861.

Evidence suggests that she ran the blockade more than once during the next few months. Upon the last occasion, Union warships fired upon her, but she made port unscathed.

After Union combined forces began taking control of the Florida coast early in March 1862, the schooner was scuttled in Dunn's Creek—a tributary of the St. Johns River—to avoid capture. She was found there on 18 March 1862 by a Union expedition; raised after a week's labor; and towed to Port Royal, S.C., where she was repaired. Thought was given to sending her to the Naval Academy for use as a practice ship. Flag Officer Samuel F. Du Pont wrote to Washington to learn the Navy Department's intentions in the matter. He never received a reply to this query, and had the former yacht outfitted as a dispatch vessel and blockader.

Acting Master Jonathan Baker began the yacht's service in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron when he sailed her to Florida waters with dispatches for warships operating along the coast. *America* then took station in the inner line of blockaders off Charleston. From time to time she fired upon ships as they attempted to run into or to escape from that port. Her first success came on the night of 13 October when she captured the schooner *David Crockett* which was trying to slip out to sea with a cargo of turpentine and rosin to be delivered at Bermuda.

On 26 October, Du Pont ordered *America* to New York for repairs which lasted until late in the year. The yacht returned to Port Royal on 3 January 1863 and took station in Charleston waters. On 29 January, she was one of the warships that cooperated in forcing the iron screw steamer *Princess Royal* aground. Boat crews from *America* assisted in refloating that valuable prize whose cargo included rifled artillery, small arms, ammunition, and steam engines for ironclads being constructed at Charleston.

Near midnight on the night of 18 and 19 March, *America* fired the first rounds into the large British iron-hulled steamer *Georgiana* which was endeavoring to run into Charleston with a much-needed military cargo including rifled cannon. Her gunfire and signals to other Union warships were instrumental in forcing the blockade runner aground where she was destroyed.

On 25 March 1863, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles finally ordered *America* to sail in May for Newport, R.I., the wartime site of the Naval Academy. Before going north, the yacht scored one last time on the morning of 31 March when she sighted *Antelope* and brought that salt-laden British topsail schooner to with a shot across the blockade runner's bow, enabling boat parties from *Memphis* to seize her.

America got underway on the afternoon of 4 May, headed for Newport, and reached the Academy in time to participate in that summer's training cruise. Manned by midshipmen and commanded by Lt. Theodore F. Kane, she sailed to New York with the Academy's other practice ships which that year were sailing for the first time as a squadron. They headed south along the New England coast and maneuvered off the entrance to Long Island Sound before proceeding to Gardener's Bay where they conducted various evolutions including the stripping of the sloop of war *Marion*.

While *America* was at the New York Navy Yard, Kane received orders to put to sea in search of CSS *Tacony*, a bark recently captured by the brig *Clarence* which had, in turn, been taken and manned by the Confederate commerce raider CSS *Florida*. Deeming *Tacony* a superior ship to *Clarence*, the commander of her Southern prize crew transferred his men to the bark, put the torch to *Clarence*, and headed north in *Tacony* on a 12-day rampage in which he captured 15 Northern merchant ships.

America put to sea on the afternoon of 15 June seeking the already notorious *Tacony*. As she searched to the southward during the ensuing 10 days, the yacht encountered extremely rough weather before, somewhat the worse for wear, she returned to New York without having had even a glimpse of her elusive quarry.

After landing her midshipmen at Norfolk late in the summer, *America* proceeded to the Portsmouth (N.H.) Navy Yard for repairs. While she was there, the commandant of the yard sent her to sea on 30 August 1863 to search for the lumber-laden merchant schooner *Medford* whose mate had run away from the port with her ". . . probably with the intention of going South." Reinforced by 10 men from *Fernandia*, *America* stood out to sea and hunted for the runaway. After returning to port empty-handed, she departed Portsmouth and sailed back to Newport.

The yacht served at the Academy through the end of the Civil War and participated in the summer cruise of 1864. When the midshipmen returned to Annapolis following the collapse of the Confederacy, the schooner accompanied *Constitution* on the voyage back to the mouth of the Severn. After the midshipman training cruise of 1866, *America* was laid up at Annapolis and remained there, inactive, until sent to the Washington Navy Yard in the autumn of 1869 for a complete overhaul. The following spring, she moved to the New York Navy Yard to prepare to resume international racing. On 8 August 1870, she competed for the cup which she had won in the famous race around the Isle of Wight, 19 years before, in a race which bore its name. Although past her prime, *America* finished fourth out of the fleet of 19 entries in the first *America*'s Cup race.

In 1873, the Navy sold the yacht to Maj. Gen. Benjamin F.

Butler who used her both for racing and for cruising. She remained in his hands and those of his family until put up for sale for commercial use in 1917.

Thinking that such a fate was unworthy of a ship with her distinguished record, Charles Foster purchased *America* and had her overhauled. In 1921 she was towed to Annapolis and presented to the Naval Academy. In 1941, soon after the start of another major overhaul of the schooner, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, plunging the United States into World War II. The Navy immediately halted work on all construction and repair projects not directly related to the war effort, and the yacht was left under a shed in the Annapolis Yacht Yard across the Severn from the Naval Academy. This makeshift structure collapsed under the weight of deep snow during the surprise blizzard that hit Annapolis on 29 March 1942, crushing *America*'s hull. Her name was stricken from the Navy list on 11 October 1945 and the remains of the yacht were scrapped.

Sometime after she was purchased by the Union Navy on 9 December 1864 for service in the Civil War—and probably before she was commissioned early in January 1865—screw tug *America* was renamed *Periwinkle* (*q.v.*).

II

(ScStr: dp. 41,500; l. 687′; b. 75′5″; dr. 39′5¼″; s. 17.5 k. (max.); cpl. 994; a. 4 6″, 2 1-pdrs., 2 .30-cal. Colt mg., 1 .30-cal. Lewis mg., 9 dc.)

Amerika—a steel-hulled, twin-screw, steam passenger liner—was launched on 20 April 1905 at Belfast, Ireland, by the noted shipbuilding firm of Harland and Wolff, Ltd. Built for the Hamburg-America Line, the steamer entered transatlantic service in the autumn of 1905, when she departed Hamburg on 11 October, bound for the United States. The largest ship of her kind in the world, and easily one of the most luxurious passenger vessels to sail the seas, *Amerika* entered upper New York Bay on 20 October, reaching the Hamburg-America piers at Hoboken, N.J., in mid-afternoon. Some 2,000 people turned out to watch her as she was moored near her consorts at the Hamburg-America Line which were bedecked in colorful bunting in nearby slips.

Lavishly decorated throughout, *Amerika* boasted of a couple of unique shipboard features; an electric passenger elevator, and an a-la-carte restaurant which, from early morning to midnight, offered a variety of dishes to delight the discriminating gourmet.

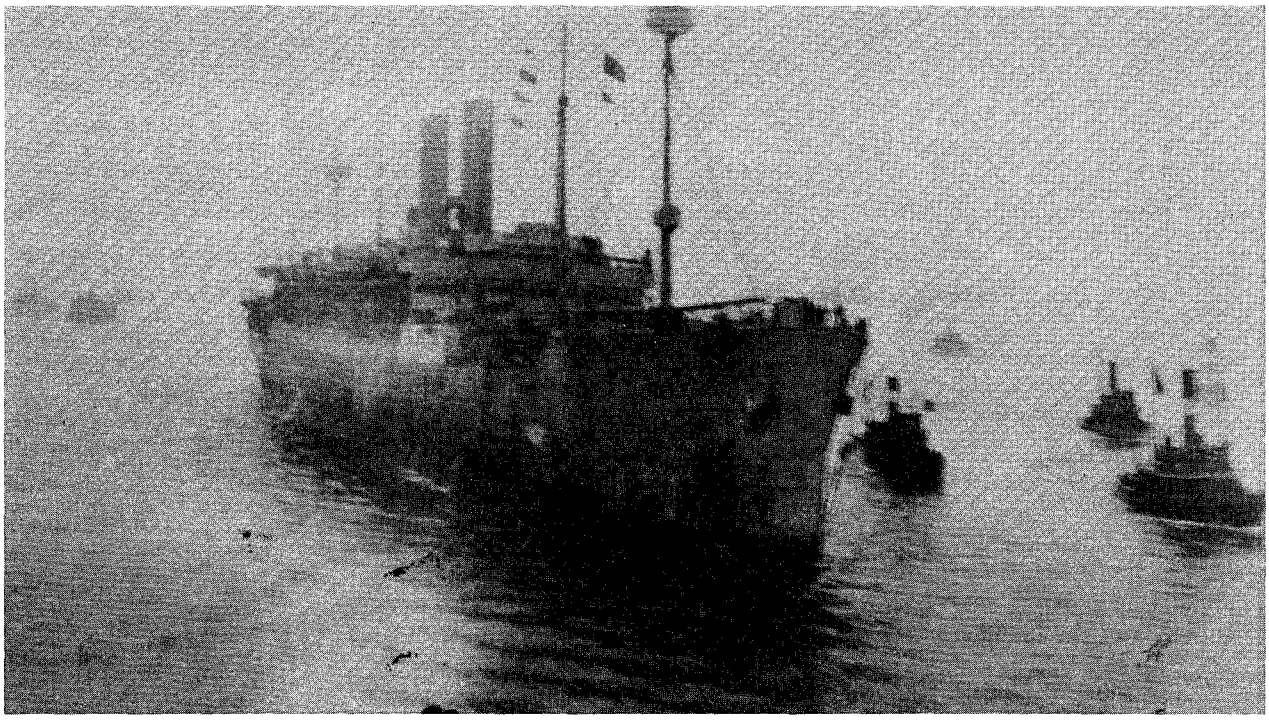
From 1905 to 1914, *Amerika* plied the North Atlantic trade routes touching at Cherbourg, France, while steaming between Hamburg and New York. Toward the end of that period, her itinerary was altered so that the ship also called at Boulougne, France, and Southhampton, England.

However, during the summer of 1914, events in the Balkans triggered a conflict that soon spread through Europe like wildfire across a dry prairie, pitting nations against nations in the First World War. The eruption of fighting caught *Amerika* at Boston, Mass., where she was preparing to sail for home. Although due to leave port on 1 August 1914, *Amerika* stayed at Boston lest she fall prey to the warships of the Royal Navy. She would remain there through almost three years of United States neutrality.

Meanwhile, the loss of life caused by German submarine operations turned opinion in the United States against the Central Powers; and American intervention in the conflict drew inexorably closer. Finally, on 6 April 1917—soon after Germany's resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February 1917—the United States declared war.

Laid up at Boston, *Amerika* remained inactive until seized by deputies under the orders of John A. Donald, the Commissioner of the United States Shipping Board (USSB), on 25 July 1917. Upon inspecting the liner, American agents found her filthy and discovered that her crew had sabotaged certain elements of the ship's engineering plant. Nevertheless, with her officers and men detained on Deer Island, *Amerika* was earmarked by the Navy for service in the Cruiser-Transport Force as a troop transport. Given the identification number (Id. No.) 3006, *Amerika* was placed in commission at 0800 on 6 August 1917, at the Boston Navy Yard, Lt. Comdr. Frederick L. Oliver in temporary command. Ten days later, Capt. George Calvin Day arrived on board and assumed command.

Over the ensuing weeks, the ship's force and a veritable army of workmen swarmed over the erstwhile luxury liner, converting her into a troopship. While this work was in progress, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels promulgated General Order No. 320, changing the names of several ex-German ships on 1 September 1917. *Amerika* became the less-teutonic *America*.



America (Id. No. 3006) arrives in Boston Harbor with troops of the 26th Division embarked, 5 April 1919. (NH 57602)

The major part of her conversion and repair work having been completed by late September, *America* ran a six-hour trial outside of Boston harbor on the morning of 29 September. The results of the test reflected "great credit upon the machinery division" of the Boston Navy Yard, for the ship managed to make three more revolutions than she had ever made before. The completion of these trials proved to be a milestone in the reconditioning of the former German ships, for *America* was the last to be readied for service in the American Navy.

On 18 October 1917, *America* departed the Boston Navy Yard and, on the 20th, arrived at Hoboken which would be the port of embarkation for all of her wartime voyages carrying doughboys to Europe. There, she loaded coal and cargo; received a brief visit from Rear Admiral Albert Gleaves, the commander of the Cruiser-Transport Force; and took on board her first contingent of troops. Completing the embarkation on the afternoon of the 29th, *America* sailed for France on the morning of the 31st, in company with the transports *Mount Vernon*, *Von Steuben* (Id. No. 3017), *Agamemnon* (Id. No. 3004), *North Carolina* (Armored Cruiser No. 12), *Terry* (Destroyer No. 25), and *Duncan* (Destroyer No. 46).

For more than a week, the passage was uneventful. Then, on the 7th, *Von Steuben* struck *Agamemnon* while zig-zagging. As *America*'s war history states: "The excitement caused by the collision of these great ships was greatly increased when the *Von Steuben* sent out a signal that a submarine was sighted." The ships in the convoy dispersed as if on signal, only to draw together in formation once more when the "enemy" failed to materialize. All vessels resumed their stations—all, that is, except *Von Steuben* whose bow as open to the sea from the damage suffered in the collision. Even the crippled transport rejoined the convoy the following afternoon. Met on the 12th off the coast of France by an escort consisting of converted American yachts and French airplanes and destroyers, the convoy reached safe haven at Brest, *America*'s only wartime port of debarkation. She dropped her anchor at 1115 and began discharging the soldiers who would fight "to make the world safe for democracy."

Underway again on 29 November, the ship returned to the United States, in convoy, reaching Hoboken on 10 December. She then remained pierside through Christmas and New Year's Day and headed for France again on 4 January 1918, carrying 3,838 troops and 4,100 tons of cargo. The following day, she fell in with the transport *Mercury* (Id. No. 3012) and *Seattle* (Armored Cruiser No. 11)—her escort for the crossing. Except for the after control station personnel reporting a torpedo track crossing in the ship's wake on 17 January—shortly before the transport reached Brest—this voyage was uneventful.

America arrived at Hampton Roads, Va., on 6 February and the next day entered the Norfolk Navy Yard for repairs and alterations. At this time, the ship received an additional pair of 6-inch guns to augment her main battery.

Shifting up the eastern seaboard to Hoboken where she again loaded doughboys bound "over there," *America*—carrying 3,877 troops—got underway on 27 February in company with her old consorts *Agamemnon* and *Mount Vernon*, and reached Brest on 10 March. After disembarking the troops, she took on board passengers who included French naval personnel—4 officers, 10 petty officers, and 77 men—perhaps crews to man some of the submarine chasers then being built in the United States for the French Navy. Underway on 17 March, *America* reached home after a 10-day crossing.

The "trooping" continued as *America* embarked a further 3,877 troops before sailing for France on 6 April 1918. Joining *Great Northern* on the 8th and *Agamemnon* on the 12th, *America* made port on 15 April. A week later, after disembarking her charges, the transport took on board the survivors from the American munitions ship, *Florence H*, which had exploded at Quiberon Bay five days before, and sailed for the United States.

Entering the Hudson River on 1 May, *America* remained in port a week, embarking troops and undergoing routine voyage repairs, before sailing for France in company with *George Washington* (Id No. 3018). *De Kalb* (Id. No. 3010), coming from Newport News, Va., joined the two ships on the 10th; and the three continued on their voyage together. Shortly after 0300 on 18 May, *De Kalb*'s quartermaster sighted what appeared to be a periscope some 50 yards from the ship. Two lookouts and an Army sentry reported seeing the same thing; and, a few moments later, the transport sounded the general quarters. However, as all hands manned their battle stations as ships turned to port, the "periscope" vanished—perhaps the product of overactive imaginations. In any event, later that day, the three transports reached Brest and began discharging cargo and disembarking the valuable troops she had carried.

After only a three-day turnaround period, *America* sailed for the United States, at 1550 on 21 May, again in company with *George Washington* and *De Kalb*, and an escort of destroyers to shepherd them through the dangerous coastal waters. Trouble was not long in coming. Four hours out, one of the escorts, on the right flank, let a round fly at an object supposed to be a "submarine." Three of the destroyers fell back, opened fire, and dropped depth charges. Apparently, whatever had triggered the destroyers' alarm soon vanished; and the convoy proceeded on, unmolested. The destroyer escort left the convoy to its own devices after 2200 on 22 May, and the transports themselves parted company on the 23d—*De Kalb* dropping back and *George Washington* remaining slightly in the lead, until, on the 25th, *America* found herself steaming alone. On the afternoon of the 29th, she reached Hoboken without incident.

America commenced her sixth voyage on 10 June, clearing the port of embarkation with 5,305 troops on board, and in company with her old consorts *Mount Vernon* and *Agamemnon*, as well as *Orizaba* (Id No. 1536). Joined in European waters by their coastal escort eight days later, the transports safely reached Brest on 19 June and began to disembark and unload. *America* sailed for the United States in company with *Orizaba*, on the 23d, parted company with that ship three days later, and arrived at Hoboken on 1 July.

During the brief respite that followed, *America* briefly received Rear Admiral Gleaves on board and was painted in a "dazzle" camouflage pattern designed to obscure the ship's lines, a pattern that she would wear for the remainder of her days as a wartime transport.

Late on 9 July, *America* sailed on the seventh of her voyages to Europe for the Navy. Just before midnight on the 14th, while the convoy steamed through a storm that limited visibility severely, a stranger, SS *Instructor*, unwittingly wandered into the formation and ran afoul of *America*. In spite of attempts at radical course changes by both ships, *America* struck the intruder near the break of her poop and sheared off her stern which sank almost immediately. *America*'s swing threw the wreck of *Instructor* clear, allowing it to pass down the transport's port side without touching before it sank less than 10 minutes later. *America* stopped briefly to search for survivors, but the danger of lurking U-boats limited the pause to the most abbreviated of durations, and the storm added other obstacles. As a result, *America* succeeded in rescuing only the 11 *Instructor* crewmen who managed to man a lifeboat. Tragically, the exigencies of war forced *America* to abandon the other 31 to their fate. A court of inquiry held at Brest on 18 July, soon after *America* arrived there, exonerated her captain from any blame with regard to the sad incident.

Fortunately, since the brush with *Instructor* had caused but "trifling" damage to *America*, the transport was still able to carry out her mission. After embarking passengers for the return trip, she got underway on 25 July in company with *Matsonia* (Id No. 1589), *Manchuria* (Id. No. 1633), *Aeolus* (Id. No. 3005), *Sierra* (Id. No. 1634), *Martha Washington* (Id. No. 3019), *Powhatan* (Id. No. 3013), and SS *Patria*. Upon parting from these ships three days later, *America* raced on alone and reached Hoboken on the evening of 3 August.

Her eighth voyage began on 18 August with *America*'s sailing in company with *George Washington* and *Von Steuben*. She reached Brest on the 27th, discharged her troops, and embarked the usual mix of passengers. On this trip, she took on board 171 army officers, 165 army enlisted men, 18 French nuns, 10 YMCA secretaries, a Red Cross official and two nurses, two civilians and two sailors before sailing on 30 August. One of the civilians was the distinguished conductor, Dr. Walter Damrosch (1862–1950) who, at the request of General John J. Pershing, commanding general of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) was entrusted the mission of reorganizing the bands of the Army and had founded a school for bandmasters at the general headquarters of the AEF at Chaumont, France.

America parted from *George Washington* and *Von Steuben* on 2 September and reached the Boston Navy Yard on the 7th. Following drydocking, voyage repairs, and the embarkation of another contingent of troops, she arrived at Hoboken on the morning of the 17th. Three days later, she cleared the port, in

company with *Agamemnon*, bound for France on her ninth transatlantic voyage cycle.

By this time, an influenza epidemic was raging in the United States and Europe and had taken countless lives. From its first appearance, special precautions had been taken on board *America* to protect both her ship's company and passengers from this scourge. The sanitary measures had succeeded in keeping all in the ship healthy. However, this group of soldiers—who had come on board at Boston where the epidemic had been raging—brought the "flu." As a result, 997 cases of "flu" and pneumonia occurred among the embarked soldiers during the passage to France, while 56 cases broke out among the 940 men in the crew. Before the transport completed the round-trip voyage and arrived back at Hoboken, 53 soldiers and 2 sailors had died on board. This comparatively low death rate (some ships lost considerably more men) can be attributed to the almost super-human efforts of the ship's doctors and corpsmen, as well as the embarked units' medical personnel. Forty-two of the 53 deaths among the troops occurred during the time the ship lay at anchor at Brest from 29 September to 2 October.

The day after reaching home, *America* commenced coaling and loading stores in preparation for her 10th voyage and completed the task at 0225 on 15 October. In addition, the ship was thoroughly fumigated to rid her of influenza germs. By that time, all troops had been embarked and the ship loaded, ready to sail for France soon thereafter.

At 0445, as the first rays of sunlight began to streak the eastern sky, *America*, without warning, began listing to port and kept heeling over as water cascaded through the coaling ports—still open although the fueling evolution had been completed over two hours before. Soon after the ship began listing, the general alarm was sounded throughout the ship. In the troop spaces, the urgent sound of that alarm awakened the sleeping soldiers who, though scantily clad, tumbled from their bunks and sought egress from their compartments. Soldiers and sailors both streamed up ladders topside; others jumped for safety on the coal barges, still alongside, or down cargo nets to the dock. Sentries on deck fired their rifles in the air to add to the din as they, in that fashion, sought to warn their comrades on board.

Comdr. Edward C. S. Baker, the executive officer, in the absence of Capt. Zeno E. Briggs whose wife was seriously ill, directed Lt. John G. M. Stone, the gunnery officer, to clear the lower compartments. Stone performed his duty magnificently, and was credited with leading to safety many soldiers and sailors who had been blindly plunging through various compartments (the flooding of the engine rooms had put the lights out throughout the ship) seeking some means of escape.

Rear Admiral Gleaves arrived at the dock soon after the ship sank, the water covering her main deck, to see personally what had happened to one of the largest transports in the Cruiser-Transport Force. Before the day was out, a court of inquiry began meeting to determine what had happened. Over the ensuing days, salvage efforts continued, including the removal of guns, cargo, and other equipment, as well as the search for the six men unaccounted for at muster. Eventually, the bodies of all—four soldiers and two sailors—were recovered. Divers worked continuously, closing open ports (almost all on "G" deck had been left open to allow the air to be cleared of the smell of disinfectants that had been used to cleanse and fumigate the compartments). She was raised and refloated on 21 November 1918—10 days after the armistice was signed ending World War I. On 16 December, *America* was towed by 10 tugs to the New York Navy Yard where she remained undergoing the extensive repairs occasioned by her sinking, well into February 1919.

While unable to determine definitely what had caused the sinking, the court of inquiry posited that water had entered the ship through open ports on "G" deck. An "unofficial opinion" held by some officers in the case maintained that the listing of the ship had been caused by mud suction—that the ship, to some extent, had been resting on the bottom, and that, when the tide rose, one side was released before the other.

Foreshadowing the "Magic-Carpet" operations which would follow World War II, a massive effort was made after the armistice to return the veterans of the American Expeditionary Force to home. *America* participated in this gigantic effort which commenced for her on 21 February when the ship sailed for Brest, France, and concluded on 15 September. Between that time, the transport made eight round-trip voyages to Brest. The western terminus was Hoboken for seven voyages and Boston for the other. Among the 46,823 passengers whom she brought back from France in *America* was Mr. Benedict Crowell, the Assistant Secretary of War who was embarked in the ship during her last voyage as a Navy transport.

On 22 September 1919, shortly after *America* completed that voyage, the Chief of the Army Transportation Service (ATS), Brigadier General Frank T. Hines, General Staff, U.S. Army, contacted the Navy, expressing the Army's desire to acquire *America* and *Mount Vernon* ". . . to transport certain passengers from Europe to the United States." Four days later, *America* was decommissioned while alongside Pier 2, Hoboken, and transferred to the War Department. Capt. J. Ford, ATS, simultaneously assumed command of the ship.

USAT *America* conducted two more voyages between Hoboken and Brest. Trouble highlighted her second voyage under the Army colors. An unruly crew at Brest on 4 December 1919 prompted Capt. Ford to appeal to the colonel commanding Base Section Number Five, at Brest, for an armed guard, fearing mutiny. Apparently, the Army matter was resolved, for the ship reached Hoboken five days before Christmas 1919.

On 20 December, the day *America* was scheduled to arrive at the port of debarkation, arrangements were made to turn *America* and two other Army transports, USAT *President Grant* and USAT *George Washington*, over to the USSB for operation while they were being carried on the roll of the Army Transport Reserve. However, before the year 1919 was out, events in a faraway land caused a temporary change in this plan.

A glance back at developments on the Eastern Front during World War I may clarify the transport's new mission. When it mobilized for war, the Austria-Hungarian Empire conscripted countless Czechs. Upon reaching the front, these men—long restive under Austrian rule—deserted in droves and then were organized by Russian officers to fight their former masters. However, the war sapped away the strength of the Russian government more rapidly than it weakened those of the other belligerents and thus encouraged rebellion. One revolution early in 1917 toppled the Czar and a second in the autumn placed a Bolshevik regime in power. The communist leaders quickly negotiated with Germany the treaty of Brest-Litovsk which took Russia out of the war and allowed the Central Powers to concentrate their resources on the Western Front.

This development left the Czech Legion—some 40,000 strong—stranded in Russia with hostile forces separating it from its still oppressed homeland. Allied leaders hoped to use these dedicated and highly disciplined fighting men to bolster their own embattled troops on the Western Front and encouraged the Czechs to move east on the Trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok where they could be embarked in transports for passage to France.

However, before this could be accomplished, the Czechs, who had tried to remain aloof from Russia's internal struggles, incurred the hostility and opposition of the Bolsheviks and found themselves involuntarily embroiled in the Russian Civil War as something of a rallying point for various counterrevolutionary forces. Moreover, prior to the armistice, some factions within the Allied Powers hoped that the Czechs might be used to reopen the fighting on the Eastern front against the Central Powers. As a result, some two tempestuous years passed before the entire Czech Legion finally assembled at Vladivostok ready for evacuation.

On 30 December 1919, a representative of the War Department contacted the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations stating that USAT *America* and USAT *President Grant* "were to go on a long secret trip as soon as possible." He emphasized the urgency of the situation and requested that the New York Navy Yard give the highest priority to repairing the two transports for sea. The Navy carried out the repairs—including drydocking—at top speed and completed the work by 21 January 1920. Two days later, *America* shifted to Hoboken and sailed for the Pacific on 30 January.

America reached San Francisco on 16 February and remained there a week before clearing the Golden Gate on the 23d. Sailing via Cavite, in the Philippines (where she tarried from 15 to 23 March), and Nagasaki, Japan, *America* reached Vladivostok soon thereafter.

While the transport had been on her way to the Russian Far Eastern port, the situation in Russia had deteriorated markedly. Bolshevik armies had driven the White Russian forces back into Siberia, and the collapse of the White government, headed by Admiral Alexander Kolchak, sounded the death knell of the west-

ern attempt to intervene in the Civil War. By the time the ship arrived at Vladivostok, the evacuation of the Czech Legion was well underway. Adding to the number of people to be transported were the several hundred wives and children of Czech soldiers, since some 1,600 men had married during the period of the "Czech Anabasis" in Russia. By 20 May, the last of the Czech troops had arrived in Vladivostok. Five days later, the United States consul in that port estimated that some 13,200 remained to be repatriated in the five or six remaining transports, which included *America*. Ultimately, USAT *Thomas* and USAT *America* reached Trieste on 8 August, disembarking their contingents of Czechs without incident.

For *America*, further service—now in civilian livery—awaited. Reconditioned to resume her place in the transatlantic passenger trade, she commenced her maiden voyage as an American passenger liner on 22 June 1921, sailing for Bremen, Germany, with stops at Plymouth, England, and Cherbourg, France, en route.

For the next 11 years, *America* plied the Atlantic, ranking third only in size to the United States Lines' ships *Leviathan* and *George Washington*—the latter her erstwhile running mate from the Cruiser-Transport Force days. On two occasions, *America* figured in the headlines. The first occurred on 10 March 1926, as the ship lay moored in the yard of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., Newport News, Va., awaiting final trials after being reconditioned. A fire broke out on board only a day before she was to be returned to her owner. The blaze raged for seven hours and eventually consumed most of the passenger cabins as it swept the ship nearly from stem to stern, causing an estimated $2,000,000 worth of damage.

The second newsworthy incident began on 22 January 1929 when *America*—then commanded by Capt. George Fried—was steaming from France to New York. As she battled her way through a terrific storm, the liner picked up distress signals from the Italian steamship, *Florida*. Guided by her radio direction finder, the American ship homed in on the Italian and, late the following afternoon, finally sighted the endangered vessel through light snow squalls. Taking a position off *Florida*'s weather beam, *America* lowered her number one lifeboat, commanded by her Chief Officer, Harry Manning, with a crew of eight men.

After the boat had been rowed to within 50 feet of the listing *Florida*, Manning had a line thrown across to the eager crew of the distressed freighter—some of whom were nearly naked, dazed, and hysterical from exposure. One by one, the 32 men from the Italian ship came across the rope. By the time the last of them, the ship's captain, had been dragged on board the pitching lifeboat, the winds had reached gale force, with violent snow and rain squalls, with a high, rough, sea running. Then, via ladders, "monkey ropes," cargo nets, and two "prized homemade breeches buoys," sailors on board *America* brought up *Florida*'s survivors, until all 32 were safe and sound. Finally, they pulled their shipmates from the rescue party back on board. Chief Officer Manning was brought up last. Capt. Fried felt that it was highly dangerous to attempt to hoist the number one lifeboat on board and, rather than risk lives, ordered it cut adrift.

In 1931 and 1932, after two modern ships, *Washington* and *Manhattan*, had been added to the fleet of the United States Lines, *America* was laid up at Point Patience, Md., on the Patuxent River, along with her consorts of days gone by—*George Washington, Agamemnon*, and *Mount Vernon*, all veterans of the old Cruiser-Transport Force. For the next eight years, *America* lay in reserve, riding quietly at her moorings as she awaited the call back to service.

When the United States transferred 50 overage "flush deckers" to the British government in the summer of 1940 in exchange for leases to strategic base sites in the Atlantic, one of the acquisitions was St. John's, Newfoundland. Now bases require garrisons; garrisons require troops; and troops require barracks. But no barracks existed at St. John's, so an interim solution had to be provided.

As a result, in October 1940, *America* was towed to Baltimore, Md., to undergo rehabilitation in the Bethlehem Steel Company yard. Earmarked for use as a floating barracks, the ship would provide quarters for 1,200 troops—the garrison for the new base at St. John's. Still a coal-burner, the ship could only make a shadow of her formerly magnificent speed—10 knots.

With the ship's new role came a new name. Possibly to avoid confusion with the liner *America*, then building at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., the transport's name was changed to *Edmund B. Alexander*, in keeping with the Army's policy of naming its oceangoing transports for famous general officers. This name honored Edmund Brooke Alexander (1800-1888), who had been brevetted major at Cerro Gordo (18 April 1847) and lieutenant colonel at Contreras and Churubusco (20 August 1847), in the war with Mexico. During the Civil War, he had served as provost marshal in St. Louis, Mo., performing his "delicate and important duties" in a way that merited "the favor of both friend and foe" alike.

Ready for her new duties by January 1941, *Edmund B. Alexander* sailed for Newfoundland, escorted by USCGC *Duane*. She remained there, a floating barracks, until quarters to house the troops had been constructed on shore. At that time, June 1941, she returned to New York.

Extensive repairs in the yards of the Atlantic Basin Iron Works followed. The ship operated briefly between New Orleans and the Panama Canal Zone. Subsequently ordered to Baltimore in May 1942, *Edmund B. Alexander* spent almost a year undergoing a major facelifting, as well as internal work. During the overhaul, she acquired a single funnel, replacing the two, and was converted to burn oil fuel instead of coal. Most importantly, she could now turn up the speed she used to make as one of the premier ocean liners of her day, 17 knots.

Edmund B. Alexander carried troops between New York and the European and Mediterranean theaters for the remainder of World War II. Altered during February and March 1946 to carry military dependents (904 adults—possibly war brides—and 314 children) back from Europe, she performed such duty for the next three years and was placed in reserve at Hawkins' Point, Md., on 26 May 1949. Taken thence on 28 January 1951 to lay-up in the Hudson River, *Edmund B. Alexander* remained there for almost six more years.

This time the call back to active service never sounded. The venerable ship was sold to the Bethlehem Steel Co., of Baltimore, on 16 January 1957 and was broken up under the scrapper's torch a short time later.

III

(CV–66: dp. 80,800 (f.); l. 1,047′6″; b. 130′; e. w. 249′; dr. 35′7″; s.20+ k.; cpl. 4,582; a. 4 Terrier; ac. 70+; cl. *Kitty Hawk*)

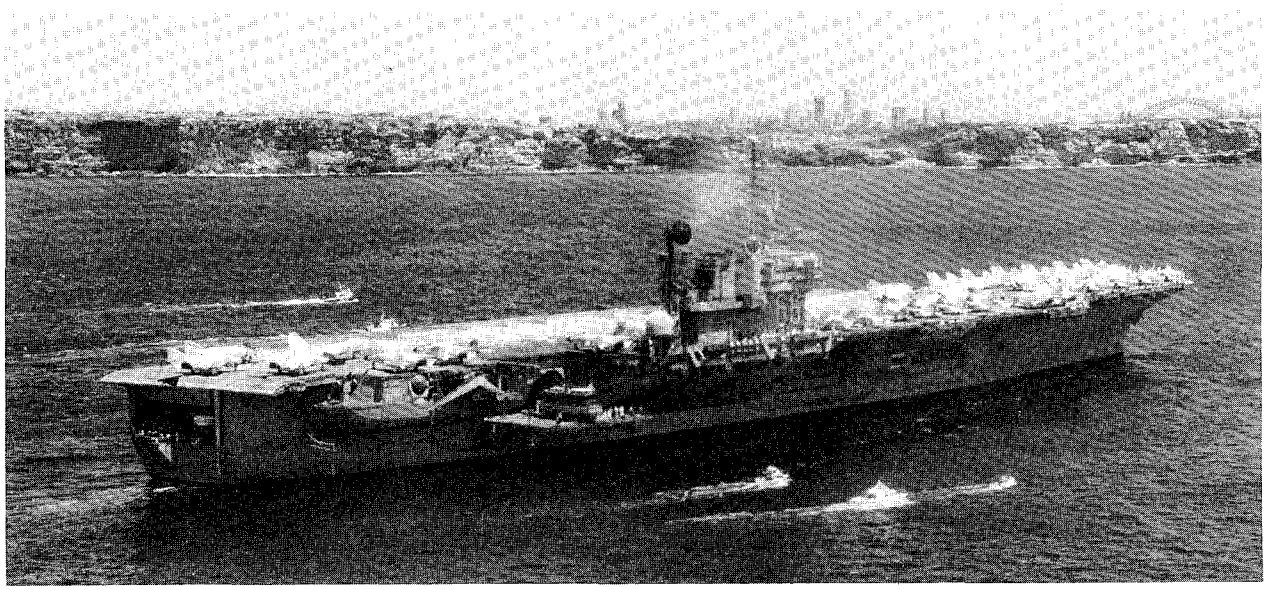
The third *America* (CV–66) was laid down on 1 January 1961 at Newport News, Va., by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Corp.; launched on 1 February 1964; sponsored by Mrs. David L. McDonald, wife of Admiral David L. McDonald, the Chief of Naval Operations; and commissioned at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on 23 January 1965, Capt. Lawrence Heyworth, Jr., in command.

After fitting out there until 15 March 1965, *America* remained in Hampton Roads for operations off the Virginia capes until getting underway on 25 March. She conducted her first catapult launch on 5 April 1965, with Comdr. Kenneth B. Austin, the carrier's executive officer, piloting a Douglas A–4C "Skyhawk." Proceeding thence to the Caribbean, the carrier conducted shakedown training and concluded it at Guantanamo Bay on 23 June.

Entering the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for post-shakedown availability on 10 July, she remained there until 21 August. She next operated locally through late August and then proceeded to the operating areas off the Virginia capes and to Bermuda, arriving back at Norfolk on 9 September. On 25 September, Rear Admiral J. O. Cobb broke his flag as Commander, Carrier Division (CarDiv) 2.

America sailed for her first Mediterranean deployment late in 1965. New Year's Day, 1966, found her at Livorno, Italy. Over the ensuing weeks, the ship visited Cannes, France; Genoa, Italy; Toulon, France; Athens, Greece; Istanbul, Turkey; Beirut, Lebanon; Valletta, Malta; Taranto, Italy; Palma, Majorca, Spain; and Pollensa Bay, Spain. She sailed on 1 July for the United States. Early in the deployment, from 28 February to 10 March, *America* participated in a joint Franco-American exercise, "Fairgame IV," which simulated conventional warfare against a country attempting to invade a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Oragnization) ally. She arrived at NOB, Norfolk, on 10 July, remaining there for only a short time before shifting to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on 15 July for availability.

America operated locally in the Norfolk area from 29 August to 19 September, after which time she proceeded to Guantanamo Bay to carry out training. After Hurricane "Inez" swirled thrugh



America (CV–66)—her crew spelling out a cheery "HI SYDNEY" on the flight deck—approaches Sydney, Australia, on 11 November 1968, accompanied by a flotilla of small boats, in this view taken by Photographer 1st Class William M. Welch, Jr. (NH 96651)

the region, her sailors spent an estimated 1,700 man-hours in helping the naval base at Guantanamo to recover and return to normal operations.

The following month, *America* initiated into carrier service the Ling-Temco-Vought A–7A "Corsair II", conducting its flight qualifications off the Virginia capes, while she also conducted automatic carrier landing system trials which demonstrated the feasability of "no hands" landings of McDonnell-Douglas F–4 "Phantom" and Vought F–8 "Crusader" aircraft.

From 28 November to 15 December, *America* took port in "LANTFLEX 66," gaining experience in the areas of antiair, antisubmarine, and carrier strike operations. The ship also participated in a mine drop, missile shoots, and provided air support for amphibious operations. She returned to NOB Norfolk on 15 December, remaining there through the end of the year 1966.

On 10 January 1967, *America* departed Norfolk for her second Mediterranean cruise and relieved *Independence* (CV–62) at Pollensa Bay on 22 January. While crossing the Atlantic, *America* conducted: carrier qualifications for her SH–3A crews, missile shoots in the mid-Atlantic, day and night air operations and various other exercises. Upon nearing Gibraltar, she received a visit from Soviet long-range reconnaissance aircraft, Tupelov TU–95 "Bears" on 18 January. Two F–4B "Phantom" jets met the "Bears" as they approached and escorted them past the ship.

Before anchoring at Athens, on 4 February, *America* participated with Italian control and reporting centers in an intercept-controller exercise. Shortly afterwards, America again met with Italian forces in an exercise involving raids upon an attack carrier by fast patrol boats.

The beginning of March found *America* and her consorts, operating as Task Group (TG) 60.1, participating in the United States/United Kingdom Exercise "Poker Hand IV" with the British aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes*. *America* and *Hermes* provided raid aircraft to test each other's antiaircraft defenses.

On 1 April, "Dawn Clear," a two-day NATO exercise, commenced with TG 60.1 units participating. During the first day, *America* provided raid aircraft against Greek and Turkish "targets." The following day, the exercise continued as Greek aircraft flew raids against TG 60.1 surface units. Following "Dawn Clear," the ship conducted routine training operations in the Ionian Sea.

America anchored at Valletta at 1000 on 5 April for a five-day visit. Weighing anchor on 10 April, the carrier departed Malta to sail for task group operations in the Ionian Sea. She conducted an open sea missile exercise with the guided missile destroyers *Josephus Daniels* (DLG–27) and *Harry E. Yarnell* (DLG–17). Other operational aspects of the at-sea period consisted of routine day/night flight operations and a major underway replenishment with other units of TG 60.1.

The following days saw the threat of civil war in Greece commencing with the military coup that ended parlimentary rule in that country. Although King Constantine II held his throne, the possibility of violence in the streets of Athens loomed as a potential threat to the American citizens suddenly caught up in the turmoil. It seemed that evacuation by ship might be necessary; and Commander, 6th Fleet, ordered the formation of a special operations task force. Under the command of Rear Admiral Dick H. Guinn, TF 65, with *America* as flagship, sailed eastward to standby for evacuation, should that step be necessary. Fortunately, violence never materialized in Greece, and the task force was not called upon to act. On 29 April, Rear Admiral Lawrence R. Geis relieved Rear Admiral Guinn as Commander, CarDiv 4, Commander, TF 60, Commander, TF 65, and Commander, TF 502 (NATO). With a new admiral on board, and the Greek political crisis behind her, *America* sailed into Taranto Harbor, Italy, on the first day of May for eight days of relaxation. During three days of general visiting in Taranto, *America* hosted 1,675 visitors who came aboard to tour the hangar and flight decks. *America* departed Taranto on 8 May for routine task group operations in the Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas; she followed these with a port visit to Livorno.

By 25 May, there was evidence that a crisis was brewing in the Middle East. *America*'s crew, from reading the ship's paper, the *Daily Eagle*, could see that tensions between Israel and the Arab States had been rising fast. As soon as the ship was slated to finish with the last of her "Poop Deck" exercises, she would be heading back to the Sea of Crete.

For the next 48 hours *America* steamed east and south from the coast of Spain, through Malta Channel and on to the Sea of Crete to join up with the ships of TG 60.2, the carrier *Saratoga* (CVA–60) and her destroyers. The carrier task force, under the command of Rear Admiral Geis, prepared for any contingency.

For the next week the officers and men of *America* listened to the nightly news report over WAMR-TV, the carrier's closed circuit television station, and read every bit of news in the *Daily Eagle*. Headlines told of a worsening situation. First, Egypt moved troops into the Gaza Strip, demanding that the United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Force be withdrawn. Then, Israel beefed up her forces and, in turn, each of the other Arab countries put her armed forces on alert. As war clouds darkened, the United Arab Republic closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping.

During this time, the carrier conducted normal training operations off the island of Crete and held two major underway replenishment operations. On 5 June, seven American newsmen

from the wire services, the three major American television networks and several individual newspapers across the country flew on board. These seven were soon joined by others, 29 in all, including media representatives from England, Greece, and West Germany.

Their presence was evident everywhere on board the carrier. They lined the signal bridge and the flight deck, their cameras recording the cycle of flight operations, refuelings, and the tempo of shipboard routine. At night, Robert Goralski of NBC News and Bill Gill of ABC News teamed up to present the WAMR "Gill-Goralski Report," a half-hour on the latest developments in the Mideast and around the world.

America's presence was soon noted, and the carrier soon attracted other, less welcome, visitors. A Soviet destroyer had joined up on the morning of 2 June; armed with surface-to-air guided missiles, the Russian ship constantly cut in and out of the carrier's formation. Shortly afternoon on 7 June, Vice Admiral William I. Martin, Commander 6th Fleet, sent the Soviet ship a message, in Russian and English: "Your actions for the past five days have interferred with our operations. By positioning your ship in the midst of our formation and shadowing our every move you are denying us the freedom of maneuver on the high seas that has been traditionally recognized by seafaring nations for centuries."

"In a few minutes," the message continued, "the task force will commence maneuvering at high speeds and various courses Your present position will be dangerous to your ship as well as the ships of this force. I request you clear our formation without delay and discontinue your interference and unsafe practices." Although that particular Soviet guided missile destroyer left *America* alone, her sister ships soon arrived to dog them for days, harassing the carrier and her escorting destroyers.

On the morning of 5 June, while *America* was refueling from the oiler *Truckee* (AO–147), with the CarDiv 4 band and the "rock 'n' roll" combo of *Truckee* (AO–147) playing against one another, the word came that the Israelis and the Arabs were at war. That afternoon the bosun's pipe called the crew to a general quarters drill, and the excitement of the moment was evident as all hands rushed to their battle stations. When general quarters was secured, the word was passed over the 1–MC, the ship-wide general announcement system, to set condition three, an advanced state of defensive readiness.

On 7 June, the destroyer *Lloyd Thomas* (DD–761), in company with *America*, obtained a sonar contact, which was classified as a "possible" submarine. Rear Admiral Geis immediately dispatched *Lloyd Thomas* and the guided missile destroyer *Sampson* (DDG–10) to investigate the contact. *Sampson* obtained contact quickly and coordinated with *Lloyd Thomas* in tracking the possible submarine.

America launched one of her antisubmarine helicopters, a Sikorsky SH–3A "Sea King" of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron (HS) 9, and gained sonar contact. At midnight, the contact was reclassified as a "probable" submarine. At that time, no known or friendly submarines were reported to be in the area of the contact. The destroyers maintained good sonar contact through the night.

At 0530 on 8 June, a Lockheed SP–2H Neptune antisubmarine patrol plane of Patrol Squadron (VP) 7, coordinating with the destroyers and helicopters, obtained a magnetic anomaly detector (MAD) confirmation over the contact. The MAD equipment allows an ASW aircraft to confirm that a contact detected in the sea by other means is actually a very large metal object.

Rear Admiral Geis announced the "probable" submarine's presence at noon. The newsmen, still embarked, dashed off stories to their home offices. Other events, however, would soon overshadow the story about a 'probable' sub lurking near an American carrier task force.

At about 1400 local time, on 8 June 1967, the technical research ship *Liberty* (AGTR–5) was attacked by Israeli torpedo boats and jet fighters, approximately 15 miles north of the Sinai port of El Arish, in international waters. She had been in position to assist in communications between United States diplomatic posts in the Mideast and to aid in the evacuation of American dependents from the area if necessary.

However, the first word that reached *America* and the Department of Defense in Washington gave no indication as to the identity of the attackers. *America*'s flight deck came alive. In a matter of minutes, F–4B "Phantom" interceptors were in the air to ward off any possible attack against task force units. At the same time, bombs and rockets moved from the magazines deep within the ship to the flight deck. Four Douglas A–4 "Skyhawk" attack bombers were loaded and launched together with fighter cover. As the planes sped towards *Liberty*'s position, however, word was received from Tel Aviv that the attackers had been Israeli and that the attack had been made in error. The planes outbound from *America* were recalled with their ordnance still in the racks.

The attack on *Liberty* had cost the lives of 34 men, with 75 wounded, 15 seriously. Admiral Martin dispatched two destroyers, *Davis* (DD–937) and *Massey* (DD–778), with Lt.Comdr. Peter A. Flynn, MC, USN, one of *America*'s junior medical officers, and two corpsmen from the carrier on board. The destroyers rendezvoused with *Liberty* at 0600 on 9 June, and the medical personnel, including a second doctor from one of the destroyers, were transferred immediately to the damaged research ship.

At 1030, two helicopters from *America* rendezvoused with *Liberty* and began transferring the more seriously wounded to the carrier. An hour later, about 350 miles east of Souda Bay, Crete, *America* rendezvoused with *Liberty*. The carrier's crew lined every topside vantage point, silent, watching the helicopters bring 50 wounded and nine dead from *Liberty* to *America*. As *Liberty* drew alongside, listing, her sides perforated with rockets and cannon shell, nearly 2,000 of the carrier's crew were on the flight deck and, spontaneously moved by the sight, gave the battered *Liberty* and her brave crew a tremendous cheer.

America's medical team worked around the clock removing shrapnel, and treating various wounds and burns. Doctors Gordon, Flynn and Lt. Donald P. Griffith, MC, worked for more than 12 hours in the operating room, while other doctors, Lt. George A. Lucier and Lt. Frank N. Federico made continuous rounds in the wards to aid and comfort the wounded. Their jobs were not finished that day; for the next week and more, the *Liberty*'s wounded required constant attention.

Since the fighting had started between the Israelis and the Arabs, a weary quiet had settled over the carrier's flight deck. Ready, the ship waited for any possible situation, but the planes never left the decks.

However, as the Israeli forces moved to speedy victory in the "Six-Day War," the Arabs charged that 6th Fleet aircraft were providing air cover for Israeli ground forces. As witnessed and reported by the newsmen on board, these charges were completely false. The 6th Fleet, as with all other American forces, had remained neutral.

On Wednesday morning, 7 June, Admiral Martin issued a statement to the press: "It would have been impossible for any aircraft from the 6th Fleet to have flown the support missions alleged by various Middle Eastern spokesmen . . . No aircraft of the 6th Fleet have been within a hundred miles of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, specifically Israel and the UAR. Furthermore, no 6th Fleet aircraft has entered the territorial airspace of any Middle Eastern or North African nation during the current period of tension."

The admiral gave members of the press copies of both *America*'s and *Saratoga*'s flight plans for the days in question and a rundown of the task force's position at all times during the conflict. He pointed out that a check of the carriers' ordnance inventory would refute the charges, that both the number of pilots and aircraft embarked had changed only with the return of personnel and planes from the Paris Air Show.

America conducted a memorial service on 10 June, on the carrier's flight deck. The oft-repeated words of the Navy Hymn, of "those in peril on the sea," echoed across the wind-swept deck, possessing poignant meaning for those who were aware of *Liberty*'s travail.

As Israeli forces advanced towards the Suez Canal and the Jordan River, and appeals for a cease-fire came, the tension relaxed aboard ship. The crew took time out for an 11-bout boxing smoker in the hangar bay. With a running commentary by the Gill-Goralski team, nearly 2,000 crew members crowded around the ring while others watched the action over closed circuit television. *America* continued on station for several more days, but the tension seemed to have gone. The newsmen left, the uninvited Soviet guests called no more, and regular flight operations resumed. During the crisis, the presence of *America* and the 6th Fleet had demonstrated once again the power, mobility, and flexibility of sea power.

On a lighter note, during the same period, other activities

were happening aboard ship, and in Paris, France. Two squadrons of CVW–6 participated in the 27th Paris Air Show held at the French capital's Le Bourget Airport from 25 May to 5 June. A Fighter Squadron (VF) 33 F–4B "Phantom" and an Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 122 Grumman E–2A "Hawkeye" were on display at the airfield throughout the show.

America next hosted, commencing on 14 June, 49 midshipmen from the United States Naval Academy and Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) units across the country. For six weeks the "middies," under the watchful eyes of the ship's officers, filled junior officer billets in all of the departments in the ship. In late July, the second group of 41 "middies" arrived for their six-week cruise.

America transited the Dardanelles on 21 June and arrived at Istanbul, where Rear Admiral Geis laid a wreath at the foot of the grave of the Unknown Soldier as a tribute to the Turkish war dead. Three days later, however, a group of angry demonstrators burned the wreath. Then, approximately 600 students, with 1,500 spectators and sympathizers, participated in an anti-American/6th Fleet protest march, culminating in speeches in the area of the fleet landing. Liberty for the crew was canceled for most of the afternoon; however, by early evening the situation had quieted down enough so that liberty could be resumed. All was peaceful for the remainder of the visit.

America departed Istanbul on 26 June for five days of operations in the Aegean Sea. On 1 July, the carrier steamed into the port of Thessaloniki, Greece for her first visit to that port. For Independence Day celebrations aboard ship, Rear Admiral Geis and *America*'s commanding officer, Capt. Donald D. Engen hosted the Prefect of Thessaloniki, the Mayor of Thessaloniki, the American Consul and approximately 75 Greek Army officers and civilians. On 8 July, Rear Admiral Daniel V. Gallery, USN (Ret.) arrived on board via "COD" (Carrier Onboard Delivery) aircraft. Admiral Gallery was visiting as many 6th Fleet ships as possible during his month stay in the Mediterranen to gather material for articles and books. He also departed by COD, on 9 July.

On 16 July, *America* anchored at Athens for her second visit to that port of the 1967 cruise, before she proceeded thence to Valletta on 29 July. On 7 August, *America* anchored in the Bay of Naples. After visits to Genoa and Valencia, the carrier sailed into Pollensa Bay and commenced the turnover of her 6th Fleet materials to her relief, the attack carrier *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVA–42).

America moored at Pier 12, Naval Station, Norfolk, on 20 September and entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard on 6 October. She remained there, undergoing a restricted availability, into early January 1968. From 6 to 8 January, the ship steamed for three days of sea trials in the Virginia capes operating area. After a four-day ammunition onload at anchorage X-ray in Hampton Bay and a brief stay at Pier 12, NOB, Norfolk, *America* departed for a month-long cruise to the Caribbean for the naval technical proficiency inspection (NTPI), refresher training with the Fleet Training Group, Guantanamo Bay, and type training in the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Range (AFWR) before she could proceed to the Jacksonville Operating area for carrier qualifications.

America departed Norfolk on 16 January. Upon arrival at Guantanamo Bay soon thereafter, the ship conducted extensive drills and exercises and inspections were conducted in almost all shipboard activities. General quarters was a daily routine as the ship strove to reach the peak of proficiency required in its upcoming combat deployment to the western Pacific (WestPac).

On 1 February, *America* departed the Guantanamo area, bound for the AFWR. The next day, 2 February, representatives from the AFWR came on board to brief *America* representatives and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 6 pilots on forthcoming operations. The training consisted of invaluable and highly successful excercises in environmental tracking, antimissile defense, airborne jamming against radars, emergency aircraft recovery, and simulated PT boat attacks.

With this phase of her combat training completed, *America* departed the AFWR on 9 February for carrier qualifications in the Jacksonville operating area, and held them from the 12th through the 15th.

On the 17th, *America* moored at berths 23 and 24 at Norfolk Naval Shipyard to prepare for final type training, prior to her upcoming WestPac deployment. On 7 March, *America* again put to sea, back to the AFWR for further type training and Exercise "Rugby Match." Enroute to the Caribbean, the ship held various exercises in weapons loading, electronic countermeasures (ECM), and general quarters. On 10 March, *America* flew off the first of eight simulated air strikes. *America*'s CVW–6 flew "attack" sorties against "enemy" positions on Vieques Island, near Puerto Rico. A search and rescue exercise (SAREX) was conducted to test the ship and air wing response to the distress call of a downed aviator. She also held several missile defense exercises to test the ship's reflexes against a surface threat.

America's planes flew photographic reconnaissance sorties over Vieques, and "found" simulated targets on film. Communications exercises simulated conditions in Tonkin Gulf, as a high volume of message traffic similar to that to be experienced in southeast Asia was generated by Commander, CarDiv 2, who was embarked in the ship. On 13 and 14 March, the weapons department also flexed their muscles by firing two Terrier missiles.

Exercise "Rugby Match," a major Atlantic Fleet exercise involving approximately eighty ships was held in the AFWR from 7 to 29 March. *America* and Commander, CarDiv 2 (as commander, Task Group (TG)) 26.1, participated from the 18th to the 20th.

As the "Blue" Force attack carrier, *America* and her air wing pilots provided close air support (CAS), photo reconnaissance and combat air patrol (CAP) sorties for Task Force (TF) 22, the "Blue" amphibious landing force, during a landing on the island of Vieques. Prior to *America*'s main participation during this period, CVW–6 flew an aerial mining mission in the amphibious operating area on the 15th. D-day was 19 March. On return from their missions as CAS and CAP, several aircraft tested the anti-aircraft defenses of the task force by flying raids against *America*.

America moored at Pier 12 NOB, Norfolk, at 1315, 23 March. Two days later, on the 25th, she put to sea again for a dependents' cruise. Then, on the dark, rainy afternoon of 10 April, *America* stood out of Hampton Roads, bound for "Yankee Station," a half-a-world away. The next day, the ship's complement of men and machines was brought up to full strength as *America* recovered the remainder of CVW–6's aircraft off the coast of the Carolinas. En route, she conducted one last major training exercise. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was the next stop enroute to southeast Asia, *America*'s first to that city and continent. Now with her course set almost due east, *America* sailed through waters she had never travelled before. Across the southern Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, past Madagascar and out into the broad expanse of the Indian Ocean towards the Sunda Strait and Subic Bay, Philippine Islands. From Subic the ship sailed northwest through the South China Sea towards "Yankee Station." Enroute, on 26 May, the ship participated in exercise "NEWBOY" and the next day held carrier qualifications. At 1000, 30 May, she arrived at "Yankee Station," and at 0630 the next morning the first aircraft since commissioning to leave her deck in anger was launched against the enemy.

During four line periods, consisting of 112 days on "Yankee Station," *America*'s aircraft pounded at roads and waterways, trucks and waterborne logistics craft (WBLCS), hammered at petroleum storage areas and truck parks and destroyed bridges and cave storage areas in the attempt to impede the flow of men and war materials to the south. On 10 July 1968, Lt. Roy Cash, Jr. (pilot) and Lt. (j.g.) Joseph E. Kain, Jr. (radar intercept officer), in an F–4J "Phantom" from VF–33 downed a MiG–21, 17 miles northwest of Vinh, North Vietnam, for the ship's first MiG "kill" in the Vietnam War. *America* and her embarked air wing, CVW–6, would later be awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for their work during that time.

Between line periods, *America* visited Hong Kong, Yokosuka and Subic Bay. With *America*'s mission on "Yankee Station" nearing completion, she launched the last of her attack aircraft at 1030 on 29 October. The next day, she set sail for Subic Bay and the offload of various "Yankee Station" assets. In addition, a heavy attack squadron, VAH–10, and an electronic countermeasures squadron, VAQ–130, departed the ship on 3 November as they began a transpacific movement of their entire detachments to Alameda, and 144 aviators along with several members of the ship's company departed for the United States on the "Magic Carpet" flight.

The days the ship spent en route to Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and Norfolk were, of necessity, more relaxed than those of her six months of combat. Nine hundred ninety-three "Pollywogs" were initiated into the realm of Neptunus Rex on the